

# Kant and Stoic Cosmopolitanism\*

MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM  
(*Law and Ethics, University of Chicago*)

The peoples of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of laws in *one* part of the world is felt *everywhere*. The idea of a cosmopolitan law is therefore not fantastic and overstrained; it is a necessary complement to the unwritten code of political and international law, transforming it into a universal law of humanity.—Kant, *Perpetual Peace*<sup>1</sup>

Let us take hold of the fact that there are two communities—the one, which is truly great and truly common, embracing gods and men, in which we look neither to this corner nor to that, but measure the boundaries of our state by the sun; the other, the one to which we have been assigned by our birth.—Seneca, *De Otio*

## I

In recent years it has become fashionable for philosophers to look to the ancient Greeks for alternatives to the Enlightenment and its idea of a political life based on reason. Under the influence of Nietzsche, eminent thinkers of quite different sorts have felt a dissatisfaction with a politics based on reason and principle, and have believed that in the ancient Greek *polis* we could find an alternative paradigm for our own political lives, one based less on reason and more on communal solidarity, less on principle and more on affiliation, less on optimism for progress than on a sober

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<sup>1</sup>All citations from Kant's political writings are taken from the collection *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, translations by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, second enlarged edition 1991). Page numbers will be given as in that edition. I have, however, in some cases differed with Nisbet about the translation of some terms, and have in those cases altered the translation. In particular, I have translated "Recht" in this passage as "law" rather than "right." "Recht," as many texts make clear, is Kant's German rendering of Latin *ius*; frequently he puts the Latin in parentheses after the German term. *Ius*, of course, does not import any distinctively eighteenth century notion of rights; it is best translated "law" in many contexts, especially those concerning a notion of unwritten law. (In the Introduction to the *Rechtslehre* of the *Metaphysik der Sitten*, Kant alludes to the classical concept of *ius naturae*, writing, "Die letztere Benennung kommt der systematischen Kenntniss der natrlichen Rechtslehre (*ius naturae*) zu...") Kant's continuity with Cicero can best be appreciated if we bear these facts in mind.

acknowledgment of human finitude and mortality. Thinkers in this Nietzschean tradition have differed about which Greeks they take to be the good Greeks—since usually it will be granted that reason took over and killed off the good developments at some point. For Nietzsche, famously, the bad times begin with Euripides. For Heidegger, they seem to have begun even sooner, with the death of Parmenides or Heraclitus, whichever came first. For Bernard Williams, things do not get really bad until Plato, but then they get very bad quite rapidly.<sup>2</sup> And for Alasdair MacIntyre, it would seem that the good times persist at least through the lifetime of Aristotle and his medieval successors, and do not get really awful until Hume and Kant.<sup>3</sup>

Nor do thinkers in this tradition agree precisely about what they take to be good in the Greeks and bad in their Enlightenment successors. For Nietzsche and for Bernard Williams, who is the closest of this group to Nietzsche's original idea, the good thing was to base politics on the recognition that the world is horrible and fundamentally unintelligible; the bad thing was to pretend that it has an intelligible rational structure or anything to make us optimistic about political progress. In a paper written after his book, Williams has criticized more or less all of Western political philosophy—and in particular the philosophies of Hegel and Kant<sup>4</sup>—for bringing us “good news,” and has praised Sophoclean tragedy for directing us simply to contemplate “the horrors.”<sup>5</sup> For MacIntyre and for Heidegger (and there are certainly elements of this position in Williams also) the good thing is to suppose that in a well-ordered community we execute our tasks without reflection; the bad thing is to suppose that each political act needs, and can have, a rational justification.<sup>6</sup> For Heidegger, again, the good thing is to

<sup>2</sup>Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>3</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1981), and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1987).

<sup>4</sup>“The Women of Trachis: Fictions, Pessimism, Ethics” forthcoming in Loudén, ed., *The Greeks and Us*. This paper is continuous with and further develops the picture of the development of Greek ethics presented in Williams' important book *Shame and Necessity*.

<sup>5</sup>Hegel's views are criticized for the universal teleology they posit, Kant's for informing us that the good will is still admirable even when nature has done its worst. It is not clear to me why Sophoclean tragedy should be thought to be opposed to that latter idea. The Sophoclean hero has different traits from those of the Kantian “hero”; but both show an undiminished integrity in the face of “step-motherly nature.” For a related criticism of Williams, see Robert Loudén, “Bad News About Good News: Response to Bernard Williams,” in Loudén, ed., *The Greeks and Us: Essays in Honor of Arthur W. H. Adkins* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Loudén effectively compares Kant's demand that we pursue justice “even though the heavens may fall” with Deianeira's demand not to be cheated of the truth, even though calamity will ensue.

<sup>6</sup>See especially MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, pp. 140–1, where he illustrates the allegedly unreflective attitude to practice in the Greek *polis*, and in Aristotle's *Ethics*, through the picture of a hockey player who has an opportunity to pass in the closing minutes of a game, and perceives that he or she (MacIntyre's non-sexist language, not mine) must do so if the team is to have a chance to score. This is supposed to illustrate a form of life in which roles structure action, goods are “unambiguously ordered,” and reflection is not required. MacIntyre gives hockey players much too little credit for creativity, flexibility, and initiative—the fact that they do not sit down to think does not mean that they are not thinking. But even if he were fair to hockey, he is quite unfair to the Greek *polis*, where nothing seems to have happened without an argument. (The speeches in Thucydides—a much admired author for both Williams and MacIntyre—show, whether historical or not, the sort of extended and frequently very abstract reflection that was taken to be the sort of thing political actors would say.) For a more detailed criticism of MacIntyre, see my review of *Whose Justice*, “Recoiling from Reason,” in the *New York Review of Books*, November 1989.

wait somewhat passively for the revelation of Being, the way a poet waits for the voice of inspiration or the believer for the voice of God. The bad thing is to take matters into our own hands, crafting our politics to suit our own perceived human purposes. All agree, at any rate, in their opposition to a hopeful, active, and reason-based politics grounded in an idea of reverence for rational humanity wherever we find it.

It is not my purpose to quarrel with these thinkers' interpretation of the Greek *polis*—though in fact I do believe that they vastly underrate the importance of rational justification and rational argument to the fifth-century *polis* and fifth-century tragedy, and hence underrate the continuity between the *polis* and its philosophers.<sup>7</sup> I have more sympathy, in this regard, with the view of G. E. R. Lloyd, who throughout his career has perceptively stressed the difference that a rational style of political life made to the unfolding of science and philosophy in the ancient Greek world.<sup>8</sup> Nor is it my purpose to quarrel directly with the lessons these thinkers take from the Greeks to modern political thought—although in some respects it will become clear what my attitude to those lessons is.

My purpose in this paper, instead, is to begin writing a different chapter in the history of our classical heritage, one from which I think we can derive lessons of direct political worth. For all the Nietzschean thinkers I have named, perhaps the arch-foe is Immanuel Kant.<sup>9</sup> Kant, more influentially than any other Enlightenment thinker, defended a politics based upon reason rather than patriotism or group sentiment, a politics that was truly universal rather than communitarian, a politics that was active, reformist and optimistic, rather than given to contemplating the horrors, or waiting for the call of Being. The struggle between Kantians and Nietzscheans is vigorous in the Germany of today, as Habermas' Kantian program for politics does battle with the legacy of Heidegger. The same struggle is joined in the Anglo-American world, as the Kantian politics of John Rawls is increasingly at odds with forms of communitarian political thought favored by Williams, MacIntyre, and others. In 1995 we had a special reason to reassess Kant's political legacy, since we celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Perpetual Peace*, in which he mapped out an ambitious program for the containment of global aggression and the promotion of universal respect for human dignity. My aim in this paper will be to trace the debt Kant owed to ancient Stoic cosmopolitanism. It will be my contention that Kant—and, through him, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and above all Cicero—present us with a challenge that is at once noble and practical; that trying to meet

<sup>7</sup>See my "Aristotle on Human Nature and the Foundations of Ethics," in *World, Mind, and Ethics: Essays on the Ethical Philosophy of Bernard Williams*, ed. J. E. G. Altham and R. Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 86–131.

<sup>8</sup>G. E. R. Lloyd, especially *Magic, Reason, and Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>9</sup>Williams' attack on "good news," as I have said, divides its energies between Hegel and Kant; and even Schopenhauer comes in for criticism, for bringing us the "good news" that we can find consolation in art. In a different way, Hegel and Kant are also Heidegger's arch-enemies. MacIntyre focuses on British liberalism, and strangely neglects Kant; but his attack is directed in a general way against the whole of the liberal Enlightenment.

this challenge will give us something far better to do with our time than to wait for the call of Being, or even to contemplate the horrors, many though there surely are to contemplate—that, in short, if we want to give the world a paradigm from the ancient Greco-Roman world to inform its engagement with the political life, in a time of ethnic violence, genocidal war and widespread disregard for human dignity, it is this one that we should select.

## II

Kant's *Perpetual Peace* is a profound defense of cosmopolitan values. The term “cosmopolitan” occurs frequently throughout Kant's political writings, often in close proximity to classical citations and references.<sup>10</sup> Although his own version of cosmopolitanism grows out of a distinctive eighteenth-century tradition, both the tradition itself and Kant's own approach to it are saturated with the ideas of ancient Greek and especially Roman Stoicism, where the idea of the *kosmou politês*, or “world-citizen,” received its first philosophical development.<sup>11</sup> Although Kant characteristically discusses Stoic ideas only in a brief and general way, without precise textual detail, he seems nonetheless to have been profoundly shaped by them, or at least to have found in them a deep affinity with his own unfolding ideas about cosmopolitan humanity. Some of the Stoic influence on him derives, certainly, from his reading of modern writings on

<sup>10</sup>Ancient authors referred to in the political works include Epicurus, Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Persius. All of these but Epicurus and Marcus are Latin authors, and Kant clearly read them in the original. His education was rich and deep on the Latin side, beginning with his school days at the Fridericianum; and he also wrote Latin fluently. On the other hand, as Cassirer puts it, “[h]e seems to have been affected hardly at all by the spirit of Greek, which was taught exclusively by use of the New Testament.” See Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought*, trans. James Haden (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 14–15. He did become acquainted with some Greek authors in German or Latin translations, but it was the Romans who remained close to his heart. He appears to know Epicurus primarily through Lucretius, who, with Virgil, appears to have been among his best-loved poets; Marcus he mentions without showing clear evidence of knowing the text. Most of Kant's knowledge of Stoicism would have derived from Seneca, Cicero, and possibly translations of Epictetus and Marcus. In the case of cosmopolitanism, the most important sources would be Cicero's *De Officiis*, Seneca's *Epistulae Morales*, and, if he read him, Marcus. It is worth noting that Kant's earliest published paper, *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces*, bears an epigraph from Seneca that evidently expresses his sense of his own career: “There is nothing more important than that we should not, like sheep, follow the flock that has preceded us, going not where we should go, but where people have gone” (“Nihil magis praestandum est quam ne pecorum ritu sequamur antecedentium gregem, pergentes non qua eundum est, sed qua itur”).

<sup>11</sup>The term *kosmou politês* is apparently Cynic in origin: Diogenes the Cynic, asked where he came from, replied “I am a *kosmopolitês*” (Diogenes Laertius VI.3, see below). Marcus generally prefers not the single coined term but the phrase *politês tou kosmou*. Diogenes did apparently mean to assert that local affiliations were of lesser importance than a primary affiliation with humanity; but he seems to have had little in the way of developed philosophical thought, certainly not political thought. His life was strikingly *apolitical* and defiant of all earthly authority. The Cynic background is very important historically for the Stoics, both Greek and Roman. For the Roman influence, see Miriam Griffin, “Le mouvement cynique et les romains: attraction et répulsion,” in *Le Cynisme ancien et ses prolongements* (Paris: P. U. F., 1994), pp. 241–58; also M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, “Le cynisme à l'époque impériale,” *Aufstieg u. Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.36.4 (1990), pp. 2720–833. But we may disregard it here, since there is no evidence that Kant thought seriously about the Cynics, and since it was the Stoics' arguments and developed ideas that shaped his thought.

natural law that are themselves heavily indebted to Cicero and other ancient thinkers. But Kant's deep familiarity with the major Roman authors shapes his engagement with their ideas in a very close and detailed manner. We know, for example, that Cicero's *De Officiis*, a pivotal text in the moral philosophy of the period, was especially important to Kant at the time when he was writing the *Grundlegung* and the later ethical/political works. Klaus Reich has shown in detail that the argument of the *Grundlegung* follows Cicero closely, especially in its way of connecting the idea of a universal law of nature with the idea of respect for humanity.<sup>12</sup> Seneca seems to have been important throughout this period also. The influence of Marcus Aurelius appears to have been less direct, but one may still discern its presence, especially in Kant's fondness for the term "citizen of the world."<sup>13</sup>

The attempt proves of interest in part because of similarities it discloses; even more fascinating, however, are some profound differences of aim and philosophical substance that come to light. Seeing where Kant diverges from thinkers with whom he is so solidly allied, with respect to the twin goals of containing aggression and fostering respect for humanity, assists us in no small measure in understanding his political project. I shall therefore first set out in a schematic way the general outlines of Stoic cosmopolitanism as Kant was aware of it, combining, as he does, the contributions of various thinkers, including Cicero, Seneca and Marcus; then I shall show the extent of Kant's affinity with those ideas. Finally, I shall explore two important differences between the Kantian and the Stoic projects concerning aggression, war and peace, in the areas of *teleology* and *theory of passions*.

### III

Asked where he came from, Diogenes the Cynic replied, "I am a citizen of the world."<sup>14</sup> He meant by this, it appears, that he refused to be defined by his local origins and local group memberships, so central to the self-image of a conventional Greek male. He insisted on defining himself, primarily, in terms of more universal aspirations and concerns. It would appear that these concerns focused on the worth of reason and moral purpose in defining one's humanity. Class, rank, status, national origin and location, and even gender are treated by the Cynics as secondary and morally irrelevant attributes. The first form of moral affiliation for the citizen should be her affiliation with rational humanity; and this, above all, should define the purposes of her conduct.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Klaus Reich, "Kant and Greek Ethics" (trans. W. H. Walsh), *Mind* 48 (1939), 338–54, 446–63.

<sup>13</sup>See reference to the *Anthropologie* below.

<sup>14</sup>Diogenes the Cynic, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, book VI.63. For an English version, see Loeb translation by R. D. Hicks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970). All translations from Greek and Latin are my own, unless noted otherwise.

<sup>15</sup>See, among other sources, M. Griffin, "Le mouvement cynique"; Bracht Branham, ed., *The Cynics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); D. R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism* (London: Methuen, 1937); J. Moles, "'Honestius quam ambitiosius'? An Exploration of the Cynic's Attitude to Moral Corruption in his Fellow Men," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 103 (1983), 103–23.

We know relatively little about what more the Cynics made of these ideas, although it is obvious that they had a major influence on later Greco-Roman cosmopolitan thought. The Stoics, who followed their lead, developed the image of the *kosmopolitês*, or world citizen, more fully, arguing that each of us dwells, in effect, in two communities—the local community of our birth, and the community of human argument and aspiration that is, in Seneca’s words, “truly great and truly common, in which we look neither to this corner nor to that, but measure the boundaries of our nation by the sun.”<sup>16</sup> The Stoics held that this community is the source of our most fundamental moral and social obligations. As Plutarch summarizes:

The much admired *Republic* of Zeno is aimed at this one main point, that we should not organize our daily lives around the city or the deme, divided from one another by local schemes of justice, but we should regard all human beings as our fellow demesmen and fellow citizens, and there should be one way of life and one order, just as a herd that feeds together shares a common nurturance and a common law. Zeno wrote this as a dream or image of a well-ordered and philosophical community.<sup>17</sup>

It is not clear whether the Greek Stoics really wished to establish a single world state. Zeno did propose an ideal city, but we know very little about its institutional structure.<sup>18</sup> More important by far is the Stoic insistence on a certain way of perceiving our standing in the moral and social world. We should view ourselves as fundamentally and deeply linked to the human kind as a whole, and take thought in our deliberations, both personal and political, for the good of the whole species. This idea is compatible with the maintenance of local forms of political organization; but it does direct political, as well as moral, thought. In the Roman world the directly political side of cosmopolitanism could come into its own in a very practical way as Roman Stoic philosophers had a major influence on the conduct of political life. Cicero, following Middle Stoic Panaetius, applies Stoic precepts to the conduct of affairs in the Roman Republic. Seneca was regent of the emperor under Nero; Marcus Aurelius was, of course, emperor at the height of Roman influence. Both closely connected their philosophical with their political endeavors.<sup>19</sup> Also during the Roman period, Stoicism provided the impetus for some republican anti-imperial movements, such as the conspiracies of Thræsea Paetus and of Piso during the reign of Nero. (Seneca lost his life on account of his involvement in the latter.)<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Seneca, *De Otio*, 4.1, trans. as in A. A. Long and D. Sedley, eds, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 431.

<sup>17</sup>Plutarch, *On the Fortunes of Alexander*, 329A-B, my translation; see Long and Sedley, p. 429. For other relevant texts, see Long and Sedley, pp. 429–37.

<sup>18</sup>See Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>19</sup>See M. Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); see also her “Philosophy, Politics, and Politicians at Rome,” *Philosophia Togata*, ed. M. Griffin and J. Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 1–37. On Marcus, see R. B. Rutherford, *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius: A Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

<sup>20</sup>See Griffin, “Philosophy.”

According to the Stoics, the basis for human community is the worth of reason in each and every human being.<sup>21</sup> Reason, in the Stoic view, is a portion of the divine in each of us. And each and every human being, just in virtue of being rational and moral (for Stoics, reason is above all a faculty of moral choice), has boundless worth. Male or female, slave or free, king or peasant, all are alike of boundless moral value, and the dignity of reason is worthy of respect wherever it is found. This reason, the Stoics held, makes us fellow citizens. Zeno, it would appear, already spoke of rational humanity as grounding a common idea of law.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Cicero in the *De Officiis* holds that Nature ordains that every human being should promote the good of every other human being just because he is human: “And if this is so, we are all subject to a single law of nature, and if this is so we are bound not to harm anyone” (III.27–8).<sup>23</sup> Marcus develops this idea further: “If reason is common, so too is law; and if this is common, then we are fellow citizens. If this is so, we share in a kind of organized polity. And if that is so, the world is as it were a city-state” (Marcus, IV.4).<sup>24</sup>

This being so, Stoic cosmopolitans hold, we should regard our deliberations as, first and foremost, deliberations about human problems of people in particular concrete situations, not problems growing out of a local or national identity that confines and limits our moral aspirations. The accident of where one is born is just that, an accident; any human being might have been born in any nation. As Marcus puts it, “It makes no difference whether a person lives here or there, provided that, wherever he lives, he lives as a citizen of the world” (X.15).<sup>25</sup> Recognizing this, we should not allow differences of nationality or class or ethnic membership or even gender to erect barriers between us and our fellow human beings.<sup>26</sup> We should recognize humanity wherever it occurs, and give its fundamental ingredients, reason and moral capacity, our first allegiance and respect.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup>I discuss these matters at greater length in Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), chapter 9, with references to many texts.

<sup>22</sup>See the Plutarch passage cited above; for discussion, see Schofield, *The Stoic Idea*.

<sup>23</sup>Although Cicero in Book III comes close to asserting that our obligation to humanity takes priority over all other obligations, he is far less confident in Book I, and indeed makes many more concessions to local affiliation than other Stoic thinkers. On his view of our diverse obligations, see Christopher Gill, “The Four *Personae* in Cicero’s *De Officiis*,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*. On these issues I am also indebted to an unpublished dissertation chapter by Eric Brown.

<sup>24</sup>See also Marcus I.14: he thanks his teachers for giving him a grasp of the idea of a polity “with the same laws for all, governed on the basis of equality and free speech”; see also V.16. All parenthetical references to Marcus in the text are to *The Meditations*, trans. G. M. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983).

<sup>25</sup>See also VI.44: “My city and my country, as I am Antoninus, is Rome; as I am a human being, it is the world.”

<sup>26</sup>See Schofield, *The Stoic Idea*, for an excellent discussion of Stoic attitudes to sex-equality. In the Stoic ideal city, both men and women would be citizens on an equal footing, and even distinctions of dress were to be abolished (Diogenes Laertius VII.33).

<sup>27</sup>See the good discussion of Stoic impartiality in Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 262–76.



Even in its Roman incarnations, this proposal is not, fundamentally, a proposal for a world state. The point is more radical still: that we should give our first moral allegiance to *no* mere form of government, no temporal power. We should give it, instead, to the moral community made up by the humanity of all human beings. One should always behave so as to treat with equal respect the dignity of reason and moral choice in each and every human being. And, as Marcus holds, this will generate both moral and legal obligations.

The attitude of the world-citizen is held to be strategically valuable in social life. We will be better able to solve our problems if we face them in this way, as fellow human beings respecting one another. No theme is deeper in Stoicism than the damage done by faction and intense local loyalties to our political lives. Marcus Aurelius writes about this topic with especial eloquence, noting that Roman political life tends to be dominated by divisions and parties of many sorts, from the divisions of class and rank and ethnic origin to the division of parties at public games and gladiatorial shows. Part of his own Stoic education, he writes, is “not to be a Green or Blue partisan at the races, or a supporter of the lightly armed or heavily armed gladiators at the Circus” (I.5). The Stoic claim is that a style of political life that recognizes the moral/rational community as fundamental promises a more reasonable style of political deliberation and problem solving, even when our institutions are still based on national divisions.

Furthermore, the political stance of the cosmopolitan is intrinsically valuable: for it recognizes in persons what is especially fundamental about them, most worthy of reverence and acknowledgment. This aspect may be less colorful than some of the more eye-catching morally irrelevant attributes of tradition, identity and group membership. It is, however, the Stoics argue, both deeper and ultimately more beautiful.<sup>28</sup> Seneca is especially eloquent in his description of the beauty of the moral substance of humanity in each person, and the attitude of quasi-religious awe with which he is inspired by his contemplation of a human being’s rational and moral purpose. In a passage that seems to have profoundly influenced Kant, he writes:

God is near you, is with you, is inside you . . . If you have ever come on a dense wood of ancient trees that have risen to an exceptional height, shutting out all sight of the sky with one thick screen of branches upon another, the loftiness of the forest, the seclusion of the spot, your sense of wonder at finding so deep and unbroken a gloom out of doors, will persuade you of the presence of a deity . . . And if you come across a man who is not alarmed by dangers, not touched by passionate longing, happy in adversity, calm in the midst of storm . . . is it not likely that a feeling of awe for him will find its way into your heart? . . . Praise in him what can neither be given nor snatched away, what is peculiarly human. You ask what that is? It is his soul, and reason perfected in the soul. For the human being is a rational animal. (*Ep. Mor.* 41)

<sup>28</sup>See also Cicero, *de Off.* I.107: we have two characters, of which one is universal, arising from our rationality, and the other is individual, deriving from our particular talents and abilities.



The Stoics stress that to be a world citizen one does not need to give up local identifications and affiliations, which can frequently be a great source of richness in life. Hierocles, a Stoic of the first-second centuries AD (using an older metaphor found also in Cicero's *De Officiis*), argued that we should regard ourselves not as devoid of local affiliations, but as surrounded by a series of concentric circles. The first one is drawn around the self; the next takes in one's immediate family; then follows the extended family; then, in order, one's neighbors or local group, one's fellow city-dwellers, one's fellow countrymen. Outside all these circles is the largest one, that of humanity as a whole. Our task as citizens of the world will be to "draw the circles somehow toward the center," making all human beings more like our fellow city dwellers, and so forth.<sup>29</sup> In general, we should think of nobody as a stranger, outside our sphere of concern and obligation. Cicero here borrows Terence's famous line, "Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto" ("I am a human being; I think nothing human alien to me").<sup>30</sup>

In other words, we may give what is near to us a special degree of attention and concern. But, first, we should always remember that these features of placement are incidental and that our most fundamental allegiance is to what is human. Second, we should consider that even the special measure of concern we give to our own is justified not by any intrinsic superiority in the local, but by the overall requirements of humanity. To see this, consider the rearing of children. Roman Stoics tend to disagree strongly with Plato and with their Greek Stoic forebears, who seem to have followed Plato in abolishing the nuclear family.<sup>31</sup> The Roman Stoics held, it seems, that we will not get good rearing of children by leaving all children equally to the care of all parents. Each parent should care intensely for his or her own children, and not try to spread parental concern all round the world. On the other hand, this should be done not from a sense that my children are really more worthwhile than other people's children, but from a sense that it makes most sense for me to do my duties where I am placed, that the human community is best arranged in this way. That, to a Stoic, is what local and national identities should be like, and that is how they can be fortified and encouraged without being subversive of the primary claim of humanity.

Stoic cosmopolitans are aware that politics divide people and encourages them to think of other groups as alien and hostile. They therefore insist strongly on a process of empathetic understanding whereby we come to respect the humanity even of our political enemies, thinking of ourselves as born to work together and

<sup>29</sup>For the Hierocles fragment, see Annas, pp. 267–8, and Long and Sedley, p. 349. For Cicero's use of the circle metaphor, see *De Officiis* I.50 ff. See the fine new translation with notes: *Cicero: On Duties*, ed. M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>30</sup>Terence, *Heautontimoroumenos*, paraphrased in Cic. *De Officiis* I.30, and quoted by Kant in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Akad. p. 460 (*Kant's Ethical Writings*, trans. James Ellington [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983], p. 125) where Kant criticizes malicious delight in the misfortunes of another as contrary to our duty according to the principle of sympathy. For the complexities in Cicero's view of our diverse roles and obligations, see Gill, cited above n. 15.

<sup>31</sup>See Diogenes Laertius VII.32–3, and Schofield, *The Stoic Idea*; some of the pertinent texts, including much of the Diogenes passage, are translated in Long and Sedley pp. 429–34.

inspired by a common purpose. In the words of Marcus, who develops this idea especially fully, we should “enter into the mind” of the other, as far as is possible, and interpret the other’s action with understanding (VI.53, VIII.51, XI.18).

A favored exercise, in this process of world thinking, is to conceive of the entire world of human beings as a single body, its many people as so many limbs. Referring to the fact that it takes only the change of a single letter in Greek to convert the word “limb” (*melos*) to the word “[detached] part” (*meros*), Marcus concludes: “If, changing the word, you call yourself merely a [detached] part rather than a limb, you do not yet love your fellow men from the heart, nor derive complete joy from doing good; you will do it merely as a duty, not as doing good to yourself” (VII.13). Adoption of this organic model need not entail the disregard of the separateness of persons and the importance of political liberty: Stoics were intensely concerned about both of these things, in their own way, and never conceived of the satisfactions of different persons as fusable into a single system.<sup>32</sup> But it does entail that we should think at all times of the way in which our good is intertwined with that of our fellows, and indeed conceive of ourselves as having common goals and projects with our fellows.

It is in this thought of common goals and projects that the Stoics find one of the strongest incentives toward the containment of enmity and aggression. As I shall discuss at length later, the Stoics believed that a central goal of the world citizen was in fact the complete extirpation of anger, both in oneself and in the surrounding society.<sup>33</sup> But it is difficult to teach oneself not to mind slights and insults, especially when one is aware that the political world contains much that is malicious and morally unpleasant. Marcus Aurelius speaks to himself as a person very prone to indignation and resentment. He gives himself the following cosmopolitan advice:

Say to yourself in the morning: I shall meet people who are interfering, ungracious, insolent, full of guile, deceitful and antisocial . . . But I . . . who know that the nature of the wrongdoer is of one kin with mine—not indeed of the same blood or seed but sharing the same kind, the same portion of the divine—I cannot be harmed by any one of them, and no one can involve me in shame. I cannot feel anger against him who is of my kin, nor hate him. We were born to labor together, like the feet, the hands, the eyes, and the rows of upper and lower teeth. To work against one another

<sup>32</sup>Stoics debate about whether the best form of government is monarchical or republican; but they consistently insist that the liberty of action in the citizen is something to be prized. Marcus, for example, speaks of his goal as that of “a monarchy which prizes the liberty of its subjects above all things” (I.14). Republican conspiracies invoked this idea of *libertas*, as did many Stoics on their death, especially in connection with politically motivated suicide. (See, among other texts, Seneca *On Anger* 3.15, discussed in Nussbaum, *Therapy*, 435; and Tacitus’ account of Seneca’s death in *Annals* 15.61–3, cited in *Therapy*, p. 437. It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate debates among the Stoics as to what political institutions and policies this ideal entailed.)

<sup>33</sup>The central surviving texts are Seneca’s *On Anger* and *On Mercy*, now translated by J. Cooper and J. Procopé (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a general discussion of Stoic views, see Nussbaum, *Therapy*, ch. 11.

is therefore contrary to nature, and to be angry against a man or turn one's back on him is to work against him.<sup>34</sup>

Here the cosmopolitan thought of connectedness and common purposes steps in to give Marcus a new view of his political enemies. This humane view, in turn, permits him to cultivate his own humanity toward them, and to persist in the goals of cosmopolitanism, rather than relapsing into the faction-ridden style of politics he has sought to avoid. Because he sees them as fellow humans, sharing purposes and ends with him, he can treat them as ends, rather than merely as obstacles in the way of his policies.

The Stoics are aware that the life of the cosmopolitan, and the cosmopolitan's concern with goals of world cooperation and respect for personhood, may be difficult to sell to citizens who are hooked on local group loyalties, with their colorful slogans and the psychological security they can inspire. The life of the world citizen is, in effect, as Diogenes the Cynic already said, a kind of exile<sup>35</sup>—from the comfort of local truths, from the warm nestling feeling of local loyalties, from the absorbing drama of pride in oneself and one's own. In the writings of Marcus especially, one sometimes feels a boundless loneliness, as if the removal of props of habit and local boundaries had left life bereft of a certain sort of warmth and security. If one begins life as a child who loves and trusts its parents, it is tempting to want to reconstruct citizenship along the same lines, finding in an idealized image of a group or nation a surrogate parent who will do one's thinking for one.<sup>36</sup> Cosmopolitanism, by contrast, requires a nation of adults, who do not need a childlike dependence upon omnipotent parental figures.<sup>37</sup>

Whatever form political institutions take, they should be structured around that mature recognition of equal personhood and humanity. Cicero, following Panaetius, took this to entail certain duties of hospitality to the foreigner and other (*Off.* I.51 ff.). Marcus insisted on the duty to educate oneself about the political affairs of the world as a whole, and to engage actively in those affairs in a way that shows concern for all world citizens. All Stoics took cosmopolitanism to require certain international limitations upon the conduct of warfare—in general, the renunciation of aggression and the resort to force only in self-defense, when all discussion has proven futile (*Off.* I.34); also the humane treatment of the vanquished, including, if possible, the admission of the defeated

<sup>34</sup>II.1, trans. Grube. cf. also VI.6: "The best method of defense is not to become like your enemy."

<sup>35</sup>Diogenes Laertius VI.49: "When someone spoke scornfully of his exile, he said, 'You poor man—that was how I became a philosopher.'"

<sup>36</sup>On this question, see the excellent discussion of Freud's views in Hinrich Fink-Eitel, "Gemeinschaft als Macht: Zur Kritik des Kommunitarismus," *Gemeinschaft u. Gerechtigkeit*, ed. M. Brumlik & H. Brunkhorst (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1993), pp. 306–32. Consider especially p. 315: "Die Gemeinschaftsliebe ist eine notwendigerweise zielgehemmte, libidinöse Beziehung, und darin besteht... ihre dauerhaft bindende Kraft. Die gehemmte Libido führt ersatzweise zur Regression der frühesten Gefühlsbindung der Identifizierung mit einem idealisierten Elternteil (zumeist dem Vater), dessen bewundertes Vorbild man sich als Ichideal einst narzisstisch zu eigen gemacht hatte."

<sup>37</sup>See the discussion of "mature dependence" and its connections with cosmopolitanism in W. R. D. Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies of Personality* (London: Tavistock, 1952).

people to equal citizenship in one's own nation (35). In general, all punishments meted out to wrongdoers, whether as individuals or collectively, must preserve respect for the dignity of humanity in them (*Off.* I.89). Wars motivated by group hatred and wars of extermination come in for especially harsh condemnation.

#### IV

Kant's debt to Stoic cosmopolitanism cannot be well understood if we confine our discussion to the political sphere and to the political writings. That is why, in my own characterization of Stoicism, I have started from the moral core of their ideas about reason and personhood, rather than from a more superficial description of their institutional and practical goals. It is this deep core that Kant appropriates, the idea of a kingdom of free rational beings equal in humanity, each of them to be treated as an end no matter where in the world he or she dwells. As in Stoicism, this idea is less a specific political proposal than a regulative ideal that should be at the heart of both moral and political reflection and that supplies constraints upon what we may politically will. It also supplies moral motives of respect and awe that will provide us with powerful incentives to fulfill the moral law. We can easily recognize these ideas as formative in the *Grundlegung*, where, as Reich has argued, Kant's way of connecting the Formula of Universal Law to the Formula of Humanity is his own non-teleological recasting of the argument of *De Officiis* Book III, where Cicero interprets the Stoic idea of life in accordance with nature as entailing a universal respect for humanity (III.26–7). (As Reich shows, there are many other points of contact between the two works, so much so that it appears likely that Kant closely followed Cicero's argument.) We may also recognize Stoic ideas as formative in the Second Critique, whose famous conclusion concerning the mind's awe before the starry sky above and the moral law within closely echoes the imagery of Seneca's Letter 41, expressing awe before the divinity of reason within us. We see a particularly important reference to Stoic ideas of world citizenship in the *Anthropologie*, where Kant—apparently following Marcus, or at least writing in the spirit of Marcus<sup>38</sup>—insists that we owe it to other human beings to try to understand their ways of thinking, since only that attitude is consistent with seeing oneself as a “citizen of the world” (*Anthropologie*, 2). And we can see these core notions of humanity and world citizenship as formative in the political writings as well, above all in the *Perpetual Peace*.

As do Marcus and Cicero, Kant stresses that the community of all human beings in reason entails a common participation in law (*ius*), and, by our very rational existence, a common participation in a virtual polity, a cosmopolis that has an implicit structure of claims and obligations regardless of whether or not there is an actual political organization in place to promote and vindicate these.

<sup>38</sup>Here is an instance in which the influence of the Stoics may have reached Kant indirectly, through the mediation of natural law writers who were ultimately much influenced by Marcus.

When he refers to “the idea of a cosmopolitan law,” and asserts that this law is “a necessary complement to the unwritten code of political and international law” (PP 108), he is following very closely the lines of analysis traced by Cicero and Marcus. So too when he insists on the organic interconnectedness of all our actions: “The peoples of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of laws in *one* part of the world is felt *everywhere*” (PP 107–8).

When we reach the detail of Kant’s political proposals, the debt to Cicero’s *De Officiis* is, as in the *Groundwork*, intimate and striking. Kant’s discussion of the relationship between morality and politics in the first Appendix follows closely Cicero’s discussions of the relation between morality and expediency (see II.83 and III.16 ff.). Both thinkers insist on the supreme importance of justice in the conduct of political life, giving similar reasons for their denial that morality should ever be weighed against expediency. There are close parallels between the two thinkers’ discussions of the hospitality right (II.64, cf. Kant p. 105)<sup>39</sup> and between their extremely stringent accounts of proper moral conduct during wartime, and especially of justice to the enemy (Cic. I.38 ff., cf. Kant p. 96 ff.). Both insist on the great importance of truthfulness and promise-keeping even in war, both denounce cruelty and wars of extermination, both insistently oppose all treacherous conduct even toward the foe. Kant is again close to the Stoic analysis when he speaks of the right of all human beings to “communal possession of the earth’s surface” (106), and of the possibility of “peaceful mutual relations which may eventually be regulated by public laws, thus bringing the human race nearer and nearer to a cosmopolitan constitution.”

Especially fascinating is the way in which Kant appropriates Cicero’s ideas about the duty of the philosopher to speak freely for the public good. In an Appendix entitled “Secret Article of a Perpetual Peace” he tells his reader that the containment of aggression has one condition that governing bodies will not want to admit publicly, and therefore will not write into their public documents. The “secret article” is that governing bodies working on this issue need help from the philosophers:

Although it may seem humiliating for the legislative authority of a state, to which we must naturally attribute the highest degree of wisdom, to seek instruction from *subjects* (the philosophers) regarding the principles on which it should act in its relations with others states, it is nevertheless extremely advisable that it should do

<sup>39</sup>Kant’s friend Wasianski tells a remarkable story about the importance for Kant of hospitality to the stranger. A week before his death, stricken in both body and mind, Kant received a visit from his doctor, a busy and eminent man. Although he could hardly speak at all, and could express his meaning only in sentence fragments, he struggled to express his gratitude that a man with so many obligations would take the time to call on him. When the doctor asked him to sit down, Kant did not. The doctor asked Wasianski why not, since standing was obviously giving him difficulty. Wasianski conjectured that Kant was standing out of courtesy, unwilling to sit until the stranger and guest had taken a seat first. “The doctor seemed dubious about this reason, but he was quickly convinced of the truth of my statement and moved almost to tears when Kant, having collected his powers with main force, said, ‘The sense of humanity has not yet abandoned me’” (quoted in Cassirer, pp. 412–13).

so. The state will therefore invite their help *silently*, making a secret of it. In other words, it will *allow them to speak* freely and publicly on the universal maxims of warfare and peace-making, and they will indeed do so of their own accord if no-one forbids their discussions.

There remain some important differences between the Roman Stoics and Kant. For example, the Stoics did not and could not conclude, as Kant does, that colonial conquest is morally unacceptable (PP, 106–7). Cicero tries to moralize the Roman imperial project—but without much success. Seneca certainly could not have uttered such sentiments had he had them, and Marcus focuses on the task of managing the existing empire as justly and wisely as he can, rather than on the question whether he ought not instead to dismantle it. But we should observe that what Kant objects to in colonialism is the oppressive and brutal treatment of the inhabitants (106), more than the fact of rule itself; and on the other hand Marcus, in his dying words, insists, not altogether implausibly, that he has ruled his empire by persuasion and love, rather than fear: “For neither can any wealth, however abundant, suffice for the incontinence of a tyranny, nor a bodyguard be strong enough to protect the ruler, unless he has first of all the good-will of the governed.”<sup>40</sup> If we make allowances for the differences of station in which life located these two philosophers, we may perhaps say that they pursued the goals of cosmopolitanism in parallel ways, each executing as well as possible the task of world citizenship in the sphere of life and work to which luck and talent assigned him.

Again, both the Stoics and Kant have blind spots, and not always in the same place. Kant’s cosmopolitanism allows him to fall short of the Greek and even the Roman Stoics with regard to the equal personhood and dignity of women,<sup>41</sup> while we are especially shocked by the Stoics’ general tendency to accept the institution of slavery, if not all of the practices associated with it.<sup>42</sup> For both Kant and the Stoics, there is sometimes and in some ways a tendency to treat the moral imperative as displacing the political imperative, respect for dignity at times taking the place of rather than motivating changes in the external circumstances of human lives, given that for both the good will is invulnerable to disadvantages imposed by these circumstances. But one should not exaggerate the extent to which either the Stoics or Kant are indifferent to political change. Both hold that we have duties to promote the happiness of others, and both hold that this entails constructive engagement with the political life. Cicero is especially vehement on this point, and it is the example of Cicero that Kant follows most closely.

<sup>40</sup>The speeches ascribed to Marcus are collected at the end of the Loeb Classical Library edition of his work: *The Communings with Himself of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Emperor of Rome, Together with his Speeches and Sayings*, ed. C. R. Haines (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1916).

<sup>41</sup>On the equality of women in the Stoic ideal community, see Schofield, *The Stoic Idea*, and, for the Roman Stoics, Musonius Rufus’ two short treatises, “That Women Too Should Do Philosophy,” and “Should Sons and Daughters Have the Same Education?”

<sup>42</sup>On Seneca’s ambivalence toward slavery, see M. Griffin, *Seneca*. See esp. Seneca, *Moral Epistle*, 47.

In general, we may say that Kant's conception of a world politics in which moral norms of respect for humanity work to contain aggression and to promote mutual solidarity is a close adaptation of Cicero's Stoic ideas to the practical problems of his own era.

## V

But there are two deep philosophical differences between Kant and his Stoic forebears that have important implications for the argument of "Perpetual Peace." These differences concern *teleology* and *the view of the passions*.

*Teleology*. It is, of course, fundamental to Kant's moral philosophy, and a central point in his criticism of ancient Greek moral theories throughout his work, that practical reason may not rely on any metaphysical picture of the world of nature, therefore *a fortiori* not on a picture of nature as teleologically designed by a beneficent and wise deity for the sake of the overall good. It is precisely on such a picture of nature that Stoic ethics rests—although it has been disputed how important this idea is to the moral arguments Stoic thinkers make, and although it may have different degrees of importance for different Stoic thinkers.<sup>43</sup>

In Kant's political writings, however, things are more complex. For the idea of Providence does insert itself, in something like a Stoic form, although Kant is careful to qualify his allegiance to the view. In *On the Common Saying, 'This May be True in Theory, but it does not Apply in Practice,'* discussing the envisaged progress in international justice as seen "from a universal, that is, cosmopolitan point of view," Kant makes use of a very Stoic notion of nature's providential design:

If we now ask what means there are of maintaining and indeed accelerating this constant progress toward a better state, we soon realize that . . . [we] must look to nature alone, or rather to *providence* (since it requires the highest wisdom to fulfill this purpose), for a successful outcome which will first affect the whole and then the individual parts.<sup>44</sup>

This appeal to providence returns in *Perpetual Peace*, with especially fascinating ambiguity, in the section entitled "First Supplement: On the Guarantee of a Perpetual Peace":

Perpetual peace is *guaranteed* by no less an authority than the great artist *Nature* herself (*natura daedala rerum*). The mechanical process of nature visibly exhibits the

<sup>43</sup>Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) argues that the major moral conclusions of Stoicism are logically independent of their teleology. I am basically in agreement with her. On the other side, see John Cooper, in his review of Annas in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 55 (1995): 587–98, with response by Annas. It should also be borne in mind, I think, that the Roman Stoics may well be less confident of natural teleology than the original Greek Stoics. Epictetus shows little if any concern with such a view of nature; in Musonius Rufus appeals to design are peripheral to the argument. Seneca's own view of nature (in *Naturales Quaestiones*) bears a complex relation to Stoic views, and he is far more inclined than the Greeks seem to have been to stress the pervasive *disorder* of things. Since the Roman writers influenced Kant more profoundly than the Greek writers, this difference is significant for our purposes.

<sup>44</sup>P. 87 in the Reiss edition of *Kant: Political Writings*.



purposive plan of producing concord among men, even against their will and indeed by means of their very discord. This design, if we regard it as a compelling cause whose laws of operation are unknown to us, is called *fate*. But if we consider its purposive function within the world's development, whereby it appears as the underlying wisdom of a higher cause, showing the way towards the objective goal of the human race and predetermining the world's evolution, we call it *providence*. We cannot actually observe such an agency in the artifices of nature, nor can we even *infer* its existence from them. But as with all relations between the form of things and their ultimate purposes, we can and must *supply it mentally* in order to conceive of its possibility by analogy with human artifices... But in contexts such as this, where we are concerned purely with theory and not with religion, we should also note that it is more in keeping with the limitations of human reason to speak of *nature* and not of *providence*, for reason, in dealing with cause and effect relationships, must keep within the bounds of possible experience. *Modesty* forbids us to speak of providence as something we can recognise, for this would mean donning the wings of Icarus and presuming to approach the mystery of its inscrutable intentions.

In this complex paragraph (which is accompanied by an even more complex and very obscure footnote on the different varieties of providence), Kant first states confidently that perpetual peace is guaranteed by nature's design; following the Stoics, he gives this design the dual names "fate" and "providence." Already here, however, there is complexity—for the Latin phrase that characterizes Nature is taken from Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, a work much loved by Kant, but one that resolutely denies that any teleological design is to be discerned in the workings of nature.<sup>45</sup> Kant now goes on to make this uncertainty official, reminding his reader that we must not speak of providence with any confidence, since that would be to attempt to transcend the limits of human nature. In other words, he repudiates the Stoic approach that insists on grounding cosmopolitanism in a securely asserted teleology.

In the following paragraph, however, Kant goes straight back to the Stoic picture as if no qualification had intervened: "We may next enquire in what manner the guarantee is provided," he says: "Nature's provisional arrangement is as follows." What is especially fascinating to a classicist is that the material that ensues seems proof that the strange reference to Lucretius is no accident. For Kant follows closely the course of Lucretius' actual argument denying providential design in nature, but simply asserts the contradictory at every point. Lucretius says that more than half of the earth is simply uninhabitable because of climate, and that the rest is extremely inhospitable to humans on account of the presence of wild beasts. Kant asserts, without argument, that nature "has taken care that human beings are able to live in all the areas where they are settled" and has "see[n] to it that men *could* live everywhere on earth." Again, Lucretius cites war as an example of the disordered and non-providential

<sup>45</sup>On ways of reading Lucretius that deny the serious force of his anti-religious and anti-teleological ideas, see Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, ch. 5.

nature of things; Kant immediately cites war as part of Nature's providential design, in order to cause humans to scatter, inhabiting "even the most inhospitable regions." For Lucretius, legal arrangements originated because human beings, finding themselves in an intrinsically disordered universe, decided to agree to their own order; for Kant, in the next sentence, legal arrangements result from strife that is caused, in turn, by Nature's providential design.

In short, I think that there can be little doubt that Kant is struggling against Lucretius' anti-teleological view of nature, and allying himself with Stoic providential religion. His argument gives many signs of this internal debate: for example, in a strange footnote he ponders a hypothetical objection that settlers in remote Arctic lands might someday run out of driftwood, and responds that the settlers will be able to barter for wood by using "the animal products in which the Arctic coasts are so plentiful." This is of course not an objection to teleology to be found in Lucretius; but it is just the *sort* of point Lucretius does raise, and just what we would expect an eighteenth century Epicurean to assert.<sup>46</sup> Kant, then, appears to enroll himself as an enthusiastic partisan of Stoic views, despite the modesty that his official view enjoins.<sup>47</sup>

There remains, however, a large difference between Kant and the Stoics—or at least between Kant's claim about all human beings and what Stoics claim about the sage. (With respect to non-sages, the Stoic view is difficult to distinguish from Kant's.) The Stoic sage knows with certainty the design of the universe in all of its workings, and knows that it is providential. He is like Zeus in his knowledge, with the one exception that he lacks knowledge of future contingent particular events. Kant's human being, by contrast, hopes for providence, and makes up arguments about it, but thinks it inappropriate to claim actually to recognize it or to approach the mystery of its intentions—however much Kant himself appears at times to do all this. Providence is, at best, a "practical postulate", a confidently held practical hope.

How important is this hope to Kant's cosmopolitanism? This is obviously of great concern to us, since what appears attractive in Kant's version of Stoic cosmopolitanism is its attempt to preserve the moral core of the view without pinning it to a teleology that most of us can no longer believe. Here I am in agreement with Bernard Williams: if the good news that Kant's Stoicism brings us is inseparable from a view that rational purpose is inherent in the universe, we are much less likely to accept it.<sup>48</sup>

The hope of Providence was clearly of importance to Kant personally, and he seems to think it important that cosmopolitans should be able to share it. That is why, in *Perpetual Peace* more than elsewhere, his rhetoric is full of appeals to that hope. But I believe it is clear the moral core of Kant's argument is altogether

<sup>46</sup>Is this Epicurean voice in the text one of Kant's own imagining, or is he responding to some contemporary debate between Epicureans and Stoics? No doubt one more knowledgeable than I about the eighteenth century context could clarify this issue.

<sup>47</sup>See also the anti-Epicurean argument in *Idea for a Universal History*, p. 48, where Kant considers Lucretius' hypothesis that the world order was created by a chance swerve of the atoms.

<sup>48</sup>See "The Women of Trachis."

separable from this sort of wishful thinking—and I believe that he is correct to think that one may appropriate this moral core of Stoicism without its teleology of design. We are told that our moral acts must take their bearings from the equal worth of humanity in all persons, near or far, and that this moral stance leads politics in a cosmopolitan direction; we are told that morality should be supreme over politics, giving political thought both constraints and goals. Following Cicero, Kant focuses on that moral imperative and its basis in reverence for humanity, and adds the appeals to providence only as a kind of reassurance to the faint-hearted.

Do we need to follow Kant in alluding to providence as at least a practical postulate, a reasonable hope, if we wish either to be cosmopolitans or to persuade others that they should define themselves in accordance with cosmopolitan aims and aspirations? I believe we do not. Humanity can claim our respect just as powerfully whether we think the universe is intrinsically well ordered or whether, with Lucretius, we think that things look pretty random and unprovidential. However humanity emerged, whether by design or by chance, it is what it is and it compels respect.<sup>49</sup> In a sense there is a special dignity and freedom in the choice to constitute our community as universal and moral in the face of a disorderly and unfriendly universe—for then we are not following anyone else's imperatives but our very own.

## VI

*The Passions.* We now arrive at what is perhaps the central difference between Kant and the Stoics. For Kant, the search for peace requires a persistent vigilance toward human aggression, which Kant views as innate, ineliminable from human nature, and more or less brutish and ineducable. “War,” he writes, “. . . does not require any particular kind of motivation, for it seems to be ingrained in human nature” (PP 111). If we were looking only at a single nation, he says, we could deny that bad things result from “any inherent wickedness rooted in human nature” (120), and blame them instead on “the deficiencies of their as yet underdeveloped culture (that is, their barbarism).” But he concludes that the fact that all states, however developed, behave badly in their external relations gives “irrefutable” evidence of inherent wickedness. Similarly, in *Idea for a Universal History* he says that when one contemplates human actions one sees that “everything as a whole is made up of folly and childish vanity, and often of childish malice and destructiveness” (42). Influenced, it would appear, both by

<sup>49</sup>This is not to deny that the shift from a providential to an evolutionary perspective might change some moral notions in this area—for example, our understanding of our relationship to other animals, and the moral duties we owe them. On this question, Kant unreflectively follows Stoicism in singling out the human being for unique moral importance, though he is not entitled to advance the Stoics' reasons for so doing. On the whole question, see James Rachels, *Created from Animals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Augustinian Christianity and by Romanticism, with its strong distinction between passion and culture, Kant appeared throughout his career to conceive of the passions, including aggression, as natural and precultural, and not removable from human nature.

For the Stoics, however, none of the passions is seated in human nature. Bodily appetites do, of course, have an innate bodily basis. But the passions themselves—grief, fear, love, hatred, envy, jealousy, anger—all these not only require learning and belief, but are actually identified by the Stoics with a certain type of evaluative judgment, that is, with an assent to a certain sort of value-laden view of the way things are. The common characteristic of all these value-laden views is that they ascribe considerable importance, vis-a-vis the person's own flourishing, to things and persons outside the self that the person does not control.<sup>50</sup> They all involve, therefore, a kind of passivity towards the world of nature, a form of life in which one puts oneself at the mercy of the world by allowing one's good to reside outside the boundaries of that which one can control. To a Stoic, such a form of life is profoundly irrational, because it is always bound to lead to instability and pain, and indeed very likely to lead, through retaliatory aggression, to the infliction of harms on others. It is always in our power to withhold assent to these ways of seeing the importance of external things, no matter how pervasive they are in our society, and to judge that one's own virtue is sufficient for one's flourishing.

It is, then, a consequence of this view that there will be no passions of anger and hatred, and no desire for retaliation, if there are no unwise attachments to external things and persons. The Stoic diagnosis—like the basis for Spinoza's—is that anger does not derive from any innate aggressive instinct in human nature. They see no reason to posit such an instinct, and much reason, in the early behavior of children, to doubt it.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, when we become attached to things outside our will—our possessions, our reputation, our honor, our bodily good looks and health—then we put our dignity at the world's mercy, setting ourselves up to be slighted and damaged. To those slights and damages, anger will be the natural response—natural in the sense that a judgment that an important element of my good has been damaged or slighted is a sufficient condition for it, but not in the sense that the response itself is instinctual or, apart from the questionable value judgments, inevitable.

Nor will the Stoics accept the claim (made by Aristotelians in their philosophical culture,<sup>52</sup> and by many ordinary people consulting their intuitions) that anger is an essential part of public life in the sense of being a

<sup>50</sup>See my discussion in *The Therapy of Desire*.

<sup>51</sup>This conclusion is by now widely accepted in developmental psychology and anthropology. See, for example, John Bowlby, *Attachment* (New York: Basic, 1973); W. R. D. Fairbairn, *Psychological Papers* (Edinburgh 1952); Jean Briggs, *Never in Anger* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), etc. For related primate research, see F. de Waal, *Peacemaking Among Primates*, and article on bonobo society in *Scientific American* March 1995.

<sup>52</sup>See especially Seneca, *On Anger*, Book I, discussed in Nussbaum, *Therapy*, ch. 11.

necessary motivation for valuable actions defending oneself, one's family, one's country. They like to point out that an angry army is very likely to be a bad aggressive army, and that actions in defense of one's own can appropriately be taken by consulting duty alone. If one acts because it is right, not because one is oneself aggrieved, one's action will be more likely to be a balanced and measured action. The Stoics certainly do not envisage that putting an end to anger will put an end to war, for, like Kant, they conceive of some wars as appropriate responses to the aggression of others. But they do believe, as we have said, that human beings are born for mutual aid and mutual concord, and that the removal of anger will remove the vindictive and destructive elements in war, and cut down greatly on the world's total of conflict.

To what extent do Stoics think that the passions—and in particular anger and hatred—can really be removed from human life? In any actual society, say, Seneca's Rome, the roots of the passions are taught so early in a child's moral education that the adult who undertakes a Stoic education will have to labor all his life against his own habits and habit-based inclinations. Seneca examines himself at the end of every day, noting that he has become inappropriately angered at this or that slight to his honor, being seated too low at a dinner table and so forth.<sup>53</sup> This sort of patient self-examination and self-criticism is necessary for passional enlightenment. But note that as it is carried on with increasing success, the personality becomes enlightened all the way down, so to speak. Reason and respect for humanity will gradually infuse the whole of Seneca's personality, shaping not only his philosophical and juridical ruminations, but also his very propensities for fear, for grief, for anger and hatred. Because these passions are not a part of the soul apart from thought, but a certain sort of (misguided) thought, they can themselves be enlightened. And therefore the Stoics hold out the hope that the society they live in, through the patient labors of individual souls, can itself become an enlightened one.

It is especially important to see how Stoics link the goal of world citizenship to the goal of passional enlightenment. Briefly put, their recipe is that love of humanity as such should be our basic affective attitude.<sup>54</sup> This will not be a passion in the technical sense, in which passion is linked with upheaval and instability, but it will be a reliable motivation that will steer us in the world and give us joy. At the same time, their instructions about the proper way to view the alien or the other, the enemy—not as objects of fear and hate, but as members of one common body with one set of purposes—provide powerful devices for the undoing of the negative attitudes that frequently inform situations of national or ethnic conflict. Their claim is that these attitudes are constructed by social evaluations, and can be undone by the patient work of philosophy.

<sup>53</sup>On *Anger* III.36, discussed in Nussbaum, *Therapy*, ch. 11.

<sup>54</sup>This is of course also a love of the divine. On complexities in Stoic attitudes toward love, and its directedness to special individuals, see Nussbaum, "Eros and the Wise: The Stoic Response to a Cultural Dilemma," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 13 (1995), 231–67.

To enlighten the passions need not mean to remove them, although it is this goal that the Stoics actually adopt. Another sort of cognitive passion-theorist, say an Aristotelian, can hold that the passions can be enlightened in such a way that they are still on the scene in some cases, but always select appropriate objects—so that anger, for example, manifests itself only toward the appropriate targets at the appropriate time. (For the Stoics, no such targets are appropriate, but for Aristotle it is right to be angry about certain damages to one's body, one's loved ones, one's country.) Such an Aristotelian view of the passions has wide currency throughout history. (It is, for example, the dominant view of emotion in the Anglo-American common-law tradition of the criminal law, and is responsible for standard definitions of notions such as “reasonable provocation” and duress.)<sup>55</sup> So it is important to state that we can adopt the Stoic goal of passional enlightenment without adopting the specific content they give to that notion, which requires a radical detachment from some attachments that we might judge it reasonable to foster, even in a cosmopolitan society.

By contrast, Kant cannot set such a high goal for human personal enlightenment; his related conception of social enlightenment must therefore be defined in terms of the suppression of the evil forces in human beings, rather than of their education. It is more than a little odd, it seems to me, that Kant—familiar as he clearly was with Stoic ideas, including ideas about the passions<sup>56</sup>—did not seriously consider their view as a candidate for truth in this area. This fact is all the odder given that Spinoza did adopt the Stoic picture more or less unchanged, and made the adoption of that picture and its associated conception of enlightenment a linchpin of his own project of cosmopolitan reform. Rousseau, moreover, though he does not analyze the passions in detail, seems convinced of the natural goodness of humanity and discusses the formation of passion against the background of that commitment.<sup>57</sup> It seems clear to me that Kant could have taken over the Stoic/Spinozistic analysis of passion with very few other changes in his overall moral and political view,<sup>58</sup> and that the Stoic conception would in many ways have served his view better than the one he in fact adopts. The pessimistic view of human evil implied by his acceptance of innate aggression is always a difficulty for him, and he must struggle against it to find a place for his own characteristic political optimism, an optimism he clearly shares with Spinoza and Rousseau. In *Theory and Practice*, for example, he begins the section on international justice with the question, “Is the human race as a whole likeable, or is it an object to be regarded with distaste?” (87). And he shortly declares that a

<sup>55</sup>See Dan M. Kahan and M. Nussbaum, “Two Conceptions of Emotion in Criminal Law,” *Columbia Law Review*, 96 (1996), 269–374.

<sup>56</sup>See the discussion of pity in the *Doctrine of Virtue*, which alludes explicitly to the Stoic conception.

<sup>57</sup>See esp. *Emile* Book IV; and on natural goodness, J. Cohen, “The Natural Goodness of Humanity,” forthcoming. Rousseau's views seem close to those expressed by Seneca in *On Anger*, Book I.

<sup>58</sup>See here Nancy Sherman, *Making a Necessity of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

belief in immutable natural evil can cause us to turn our backs on our fellow human beings, and on ourselves as well:

For however hard we may try to awaken feelings of love in ourselves, we cannot avoid hating that which is and always will be evil, especially if it involves deliberate and general violation of the most sacred laws of humanity. Perhaps we may not wish to harm men, but shall not want to have any more to do with them than we can help. (87)

Seneca's arguments against the idea of innate aggression would have provided Kant with a strong counterweight to these pessimistic thoughts, and would have opened out prospects of enlightenment that would give new substance to the hope for cosmopolitanism.

Suppose, now, we substitute the Stoic view of passions for the view Kant actually holds, and consider the prospects of human enlightenment in the perspective of that view. How much hope does the Stoic picture give us, with respect to the containment of anger and aggression in our own world? Not much, without some fairly radical changes in moral education on a large scale, so that people will increasingly define themselves in terms of their reason and character, rather than in terms of honor, status, wealth, power, and the other things that are the common occasions of slights and damages, thus of retaliatory anger.

Furthermore, adopting the Stoic analysis of passions as based on a certain type of evaluative belief does not, as I have said, commit us to the normative Stoic view. So we will have to ask, on Kant's behalf and on our own, exactly how far the goal of a complete eradication of anger is an appropriate moral goal. I myself would not have us follow the Stoics in refusing anger at social injustice, or at damages to loved ones, or to our own bodily integrity. I would support a more Aristotelian course. But this qualification means that some appropriate causes of anger will still remain in human life, and peace will still need Kant's careful institutional guarantees.

What we can see, however, is that certain especially pernicious forms of anger and hatred can indeed be eradicated by patient reform following Stoic conceptions. The hatred of members of other races and religions can be effectively addressed by forms of early education that address the cognitive roots of those passions—that get children to view these people in the Stoic cosmopolitan way, as similarly human, as bearers of an equal moral dignity, as members of a single body and a single set of purposes, as no longer impossibly alien or threatening. If one looks at the way in which racial hatred and aggression can actually be eradicated in a person or a community, and occasionally has been, if one looks at successes in the rearing of nonracist children—we see that the success, insofar as there is success, is a Stoic success—through enlightenment of the images we bring to our encounters with the other, through gradual changes in *evaluation*, rather than through suppression of a brute and indiscriminating



urge to harm. If, again, we think about how the equal respect for women is fostered, when it is, in an individual or a group—once again, I believe that the way is a Stoic way, well described, for example, by Musonius Rufus—through enlightenment of the images of rational and moral humanity we bring to our mutual encounters, not through suppression of an allegedly innate and unreasoning misogyny. The powerful Stoic idea that our destructive passions are socially constructed and fostered in the images of self and other we use suggests a program of reform which, while unlikely to achieve full success, can quite realistically be expected to shape the ways our children regard one another, the ways in which marriages and partnerships of all sorts take shape. Again, where we see suspicion and hatred of the foreigner, we can always try to address it through programs of education that will make the Stoics' and Kant's idea of world citizenship real in our schools and universities, teaching young people to regard the alien, with Marcus, as one from whom they might actually learn something and, indeed, someone whom, given a change of situation, they might themselves be. We may make the same point about contempt distributed along lines of wealth and social class. Recognizing the cogency of the Stoic view of passions gives us a duty: for it tells us that we have great power over racism, sexism and other divisive passions that militate against cosmopolitan humanism, if we will only devote enough attention to the cognitive moral development of the young. It is this noble Stoic idea that I believe to be at the heart of the much-maligned American interest in "political correctness," by which is meant the careful scrutiny of the imagery and the speech we use when we talk about those whom we are in the habit of regarding as unequally human. In its best form this is not in the least a totalitarian idea, but one connected with the Stoic and the Kantian ideas of a truly free person.<sup>59</sup> This ideal gives us a lifetime full of work to do if only we will do it.

Moreover, where such enlightenment of divisive passions cannot be achieved in the lives of individuals, we may view it as a regulative ideal, and design institutions in ways that appropriately reflect the respect for humanity involved in it. Where we cannot altogether eradicate racial hatred, we can ensure that heavy penalties for ethnic and racial hate crimes are institutionalized in our codes of criminal law—and this is now being done. Where we cannot altogether ensure that foreigners be treated with Ciceronian hospitality, we can always seek to enact constitutional protections for the alien on our soil, and for that alien's children. Where we see the rights of women, or racial or ethnic minorities being grossly violated anywhere in the world, we can support approaches to these problems through the international human rights movement, through NGOs of many types, and through, let us hope, our own governments, if they will show themselves capable of minimal courage. We do not need to have exaggerated

<sup>59</sup>This is not to deny that there are other forms of the idea that grow out of ethnocentric identity politics; to these the Stoic/Kantian should be energetically opposed.

optimism about the triumph of enlightenment in order to view these as goals toward which we may sensibly strive, and in order to believe that this striving may achieve many local victories.

One must acknowledge that we do not see a triumph for cosmopolitanism right now in the United States, which seems increasingly indifferent to cosmopolitan goals, and increasingly given over to a style of politics that does not focus on recognizing the equal humanity of the alien and the other; which seems increasingly hostile, too, to the intellectuals whom Kant saw as crucial to the production of such an enlightenment. We may well conjecture that were either Kant or Cicero and Marcus Aurelius to look at America they would see much that would distress them: not just the dominance of anger and aggression, but also an indifference to the well-being of the whole world that would make them think of America as one of the cut-off limbs of the world body that Marcus was so fond of describing in scathing and mordant language.<sup>60</sup>

Nor is it only in America that cosmopolitanism seems to be in grave jeopardy. The state of things in very many parts of the world gives reason for pessimism: when, two hundred years after the publication of Kant's hopeful treatise, we see so many regions falling prey to ethnic and religious and racial conflict; when we find that the very values of equality, personhood and human rights that Kant defended, and indeed the Enlightenment itself, are derided in some quarters as mere ethnocentric vestiges of Western imperialism; when, in a general way, we see so much more hatred and aggression around us than respect and love.

And yet we may agree with Kant here as well: certain postulates of practical reason, and therefore certain hopes for at least a local and piecemeal sort of progress—even though they are not clearly supported by what we can observe—should be adopted because they appear necessary for our continued cultivation of our humanity, our constructive engagement in political life. Concerning this hope, Kant writes:

[H]owever uncertain I may be and may remain as to whether we can hope for anything better for mankind, this uncertainty cannot detract from the maxim I have adopted, or from the necessity of assuming for practical purposes that human progress is possible.

This hope for better times to come, without which an earnest desire to do something useful for the common good would never have inspired the human heart, has always influenced the activities of right-thinking people.<sup>61</sup>

This hope is, of course, a hope in and for reason. When, as scholars, we turn to classical antiquity in order to bring its resources to our own political world, we would do better, I believe, to appropriate and follow this Stoic/Kantian tradition

<sup>60</sup>See for example VIII.34: "If you have ever seen a dismembered hand or foot or a head cut off, lying somewhere apart from the rest of the trunk, you have an image of what a person makes of himself . . . when he . . . cuts himself off or when he does some unneighbourly act. You have somehow made yourself an outcast from the unity which is according to Nature; for you came into the world as a part and now you have cut yourself off."

<sup>61</sup>*Theory and Practice*, p. 89 in the Reiss edition of *Kant: Political Writings*.

of cautious rational optimism than to look to ancient Athens for a paradigm of a politics that simply directs us, as Bernard Williams puts it, to contemplate the horrors. There are always too many horrors, and it is all too easy to contemplate them. But, as Kant and his Stoic mentors knew, it is also possible to stop contemplating and to act, doing something useful for the common good.